

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3250  
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD  
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14037

LONDON FOR AMBASSADOR TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR, UR, US  
SUBJECT: ARBATOV'S COMMENTS ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS

SUMMARY: IN DISCUSSION WITH VISTING AMERICAN JUNE 16,  
ARBATOV EXPRESSED VIEW THAT FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES ARE  
TAKING PLACE, OR HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE, IN U.S.  
POLICY TOWARD USSR. NOT SURPRISINGLY, HIS COMMENTS  
CLOSELY PARALLEL THOSE IN JUNE 17 PRAVDA ARTICLE WITH  
WHICH HE WAS DOUBTLESS FAMILIAR IN ADVANCE, BUT BY  
THEIR SELECTIVITY AND EMPHASES CAST ADDITIONAL LIGHT  
ON WHAT SOVIETS WOULD LIKE US TO BELIEVE IS THEIR  
MIND-SET AT THE MOMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. DR. OLIN ROBISON, PRESIDENT OF MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE  
AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE U.S. ADVISORY COMMISSION ON  
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL  
AFFAIRS, HAS BRIEFED US ON A LENGTHLY CONVERSATION HE  
HAD WITH GEORGY ARBATOV JUNE 16. CONVERSATION  
OCCURRED THE DAY BEFORE PUBLICATION OF THE MAJOR PRAVDA  
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ARTICLE ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT  
ARBATOV WAS FAMILIAR WITH IT. NOT SURPRISINGLY, HIS  
COMMENTS ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE MAIN THEMES OF THAT  
ARTICLE, BUT STRESS THE IDEA OF A CONSCIOUS CHANGE  
IN U.S. POLICY.

2. ARBATOV TOLD ROBISON THAT THE CONVICTION WAS

GROWING AMONG THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP THAT "FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES" ARE TAKING PLACE -- OR HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE -- IN THE U.S. APPROACH TO DETENTE. HE ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF SHARED THIS VIEW, AND LISTED THE FOLLOWING AS SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF ALLEGED U.S. DECISIONS WHICH HE CONSIDERED CHARACTERISTIC OF THESE "FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES":

- -- A SPECIFIC U.S. DECISION TO "SPEED UP" THE ARMS RACE;
- -- A U.S. DECISION TO INTRODUCE PROGRESSIVE REDUCTIONS IN U.S.-SOVIET COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS AND EXCHANGES;
- -- OVERT AND PUBLIC USE OF THE "CHINA CARD";
- -- A DECISION TO STEP UP U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA; AND
- -- AN ATTEMPT BY U.S. LEADERS TO "EXPORT" ALL OF THE POLICIES LISTED ABOVE TO NATO AS A WHOLE.

3. ARBATOV ADDED THAT HE ALSO PERCEIVED A U.S. ATTEMPT TO USE HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO UNDERMINE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE U.S. PUBLIC IN DETENTE, AND WENT INTO A LONG COMPLAINT ABOUT THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS REGARDING CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIET AND CUBAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SHABA INCURSION AS A CASE IN POINT.

4. ROBISON COMMENTED THAT ARBATOV SEEMED DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT THE DIRECTION THAT U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS HAVE TAKEN. WHEN ROBISON ASKED WHAT COURSE HE EXPECTED SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO FOLLOW, ARBATOV SAID THAT HE BELIEVED IT WOULD CONTINUE TO REITERATE DESIRE FOR PROGRESS IN ARMS CONTROL AREA, AND THAT FURTHER PROPOSALS MIGHT BE MADE OVER NEXT FEW MONTHS.

5. COMMENT: AS IN THE JUNE 17 PRAVDA ARTICLE, SELF-SERVING ARGUMENTATION STANDS OUT IN ARBATOV'S COMMENTS, WITH ALL THE BLAME FOR THE CURRENT MALAISE IN U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS CAST ON THE U.S. THE SOVIETS WOULD CLEARLY LIKE US TO BELIEVE THAT THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS MISUNDERSTOOD INNOCENTS, WAITING PATIENTLY FOR "CONSTRUCTIVE MOVES" FROM THE U.S. ONLY SUBSEQUENT EVENTS WILL REVEAL WHETHER THIS IS A TACTICAL COVER TO PERMIT SOME REASSESSMENT OF THEIR POLICY, OR A PUBLIC JUSTIFICATION FOR CONTINUING DOGGEDLY ON THEIR CURRENT UNCOOPERATIVE COURSE. MATLOCK

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## Message Attributes

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